

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. John King, Kanshin Dainei
Generous Heart, Great Peace

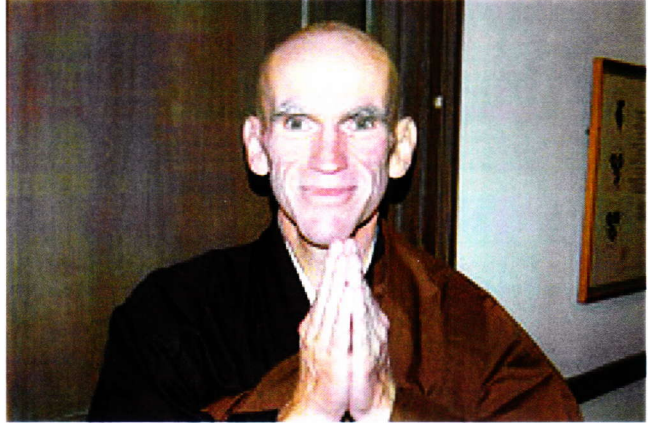
September 1, 1944 - August 8, 2006



With Love from Hartford Street Zen Center

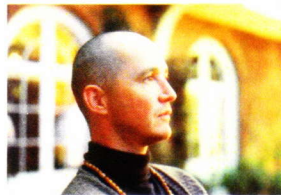
Dedication

This special edition of the HSZC newsletter is dedicated to Rodrigo Mayorga and all those who loved John ... and to John's life energy that continues to nurture us all today, in this moment.



Acknowledgements

The Hartford Street Zen Center wishes to acknowledge and express gratitude to all those who generously contributed to this booklet. Content and editing: Revs. Zenkei Blanche Hartman, Tony Patchell, Myo Denis Lahey, Renshin Judy Bunce, Lou Hartman, Seido Lee de Barros, Gengetsu Jana Drakka, and Greg Fain. Also Jennifer Birkett, Ernest Brown, Edwin Critchlow, Steve Fricke, Judy Hoyem, Carl Jerome, Albert Kaba, Cynthia Kear, Mimi Manning, Mac at San Quentin Buddhадharma, Jim Shalkham, Julia Ten Eyck, John Walmsley, and our dear friends at the San Francisco Zen Center (Wind Bell). Photos: Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce, Ernest Brown, Bob Craig, Steve Fricke, Cynthia Gair, Ilene Oba, and Hartford Street Zen Center Archives. Printing: Copy Central in the Castro.



John King was one of
the founding members of
Hartford Street Zen Center,
Interim Practice Leader,
and on the Board of Directors.



George Gavuski's (and Hal Papps's) Ash Ceremony at Tassajara

George Gavuski was a member of the HSZC Board of Directors. Below is Hal King's account of the Ash Spreading Ceremony at Tassajara. (HSZC Newsletter, Fall 2002)

It was beautiful. We were on top of the mountain above the Suzuki-roshi Memorial. You can see from the photo (on our cover page) of the scattering of George's ashes, how the wind carried them away like phantoms. Before I left Tassajara, I planted wild flower seeds over the ashes.

A couple of nights after the ceremony, I dreamt that Blanche and I were leading different processions along a kind of yellow brick road. In Blanche's procession, the chanting was in unison, but my procession was off pitch and not so organized. Del Carlson was blessing the processions with the red powder that Hindus use. He suddenly became George scattering his own ashes over the processions as they passed and bowed to him. He was smiling. I was watching from a distance and just sank to my knees with my hands in gassho."



Note: the Scattering Ashes picture from this ceremony is on our cover page.

Dear Hartford Street,

Here's a picture of John taken one year ago this coming Thursday. It seems so long ago.

I guess I don't have any special words to say about John. I think about him often and I miss him a lot. I had assumed we would be Dharma brothers and support one another for years to come. Nowadays I don't assume so much.

Thanks, very much, for your good work!

Gassho, Tony (Patchell)



Dear Hartford Street,

There isn't a day that I don't think of John's smiling face and generous spirit. One reason is that I have the attached photograph of John and his beloved students, Ernest Brown and Edwin Critchlow on my desktop. It was taken the day we gave him the nine panel okesa we sewed for him. A measure of the affection we all had for John is the speed with which we sewed that okesa for him as we were coping with the cancer, so he could wear it as he gave the precepts to Ernest and Edwin before he became too ill. I estimate that there were at least 15,000 stitches on that kesa, each one of them sewn with love and appreciation for John by dozens of zen students here at 300 Page Street, many of them by Edwin, who also chose the fabric.

I am deeply honored that John chose to receive Suzuki Roshi's lineage through me, though I consider him at least as much my teacher as my student.

Zankai Blanche Hartman



Tea by John King (August, 2004)

I've been to two large tea events recently. As you may know, form and costume are very important for the Japanese. It's beautiful to see the elegant kimonos and the graceful movements. This last event was at Sokoji temple in front of the altar, and I was reminded of the first Jesuits in Japan seeing the similarities of the tea ceremony with the mass.

It's interesting, that both the mass and the tea ceremony came out of the simple act of sharing a meal or a cup of tea with friends. Jesus probably realized that this was his last meal with his friends: "Take and eat, this is my body. Take and drink, this is my blood."

Sen no Rikyu, the founder of the Japanese tea ceremony was ordered by his lord, Hideyoshi, to commit hara-kiri. Suzuki-roshi comments that just before Rikyu took his own life he said, "When I have this sword, there is no Buddha and no Patriarchs." "He meant that when we have the sword of big mind, there is no dualistic world. The only thing which exists is this spirit. This kind of imperturbable spirit was always present in Rikyu's tea ceremony. He never did anything in just a dualistic way; he was ready to die in each moment. In ceremony after ceremony, he died and he renewed himself. This is the spirit of the tea ceremony."

Just after Jesus' death, two of his disciples were walking along a road. As they were talking about his death, they were joined by a stranger. Later, in sharing a meal with the stranger, they suddenly realized he was Jesus. For me, I think what happened was they could see the divine, the Jesus in this stranger. Or as Shakymuni Buddha said when he saw the morning star: "Oh, it is wonderful to see Buddha nature in everyone and everything." It is with this spirit that we live our lives.



John King Dharma Talk - 6/19/04 - at Hartford Street Zen Center

I want to talk today about something Suzuki-roshi said about bowing. How, when we bow, we give up our dualistic nature and just bow from big mind. I've been thinking about how we get caught in our dualistic mind. And that brought me back to Genesis and the story of the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve taste from the tree of good and evil, the knowledge of good and evil. Joseph Campbell says that these are always metaphors. We get caught in our metaphors or ideas of how things should be. That is how we get caught in this world of duality. Before we have this sense of good and evil or "picking and choosing" in a Zen sense, we are one with everything.

Here we are in the Garden of Eden and then thrown out by a sense of separation, the knowledge of "picking and choosing". Shakespeare in Hamlet said, "There is neither good nor evil but thinking makes it so." And he goes on to say, "It's the readiness that is all." And Suzuki-roshi says this similarly. "If you really have readiness of mind, koan study isn't so difficult."

I want to read a quote from Nansen's *Ordinary Mind of the Way*. Joshu asked Nansen, "What is the way?" "Ordinary mind is the way," Nansen replied. "Shall I try to seek after it?" Joshu asked. "If you try for it, you will become separated from it," responded Nansen. "Well, how can I know the way unless I try for it?" replied Joshu. Nansen said, "The way is not a matter of knowing or not knowing. Knowing is delusion, not knowing is confusion. When you have really reached the true way beyond ... you will find it as vast as outer space. How can it be talked about on the level of right or wrong?" With these words, Joshu came to a sudden realization.

In our practice, we talk over and over about sudden and gradual. But often what we are speaking about is a "turning phrase" that helps us understand what Nansen is talking about, which helps bring us right into this present moment.

In koan study, we start appreciating what Suzuki-roshi was talking about, readiness of mind, and begin to have some feeling of koans. We see these same stories over and over.

We go, "I understand it," and then concretize it, and get caught in that realization. Story after story. "What is Buddha nature? Buddha nature is a turd." These statements take us back and then we get caught with, "What do you mean, it's just a turd? That's not a very elegant thought." We have all these preconceptions of the way we think we want it to be presented to us and get separated from the direct experience.

Last night in the jail, I saw one of the rules for being in the jail, "Take your stay here seriously." San Quentin: these guys are in there for long times, they've done 20 or 30 years, some will be there all their life. There is a calmness in their practice, they are not hurried, they know what they are going to be doing tomorrow, they don't have to worry about retirement or paying bills, they don't even have to think about what they are going to be doing next month or the year after. So there is an incredible sort of calmness about them that is very nurturing, and yet, if you were to ask them, they probably wouldn't be aware necessarily that their practice is so good.

So, I just encourage all of you to take your stay here at HSZC seriously. There is a wonderful spirit developing here right now. And we are all pretty lucky.

April, 2004

Hartford Street Sangha,

As I slide into the realm of old geezers, one of the benefits is that having lived this long I've had the opportunity to make lots of mistakes. One of these mistakes is not really hearing what another person is saying.

Most of us aren't so skilled at knowing and articulating our feelings. Often what gets said is a pale mirror of the real emotions. For example, if we feel left out or not valued, we may express our hurt as anger, and that is all the other person hears. So, the process of listening is important to clarify to our self and to others, the source of what's being said.

I feel the conversations that have begun in our Sangha both between individuals and as a group, will be fruitful. It can be painful, but if we stay with each other and really listen, I think we'll be a much stronger Sangha.

From the time of Shakyamuni Buddha to the present, there have been difficulties living in Sangha. Remember a few years ago, there was a news clip of some Korean monks physically fighting with each other over some land. When I saw it I thought, "Oh guys, you're missing it". While we may not be physically hitting each other, we miss it when we don't really hear each other.

As Buddhists, one of the three treasures we take refuge in, is Sangha: "I take refuge in Sangha, before all beings, bringing harmony to everyone, free from hindrance." If we take this seriously, we have to seek harmony with each other; we have to make the effort.

There are many instances in our lives when we realize that we have to leave a situation, and it can be healthy, but when we leave, I think it should be because we made a good effort.

Gassho, John

The Relationship of HSZC to the GLBT Community - John King (July, 2004)

I thought it might be useful to make some observations about the relationship of Hartford Street to the GLBT community. I lived at Hartford Street for two years (1982 -1983). We were Maitri then, and with Issan's guidance progressively made Hartford Street into a Soto Zen temple. Blanche and Lou Hartman and Hekizan Tom Girardot would also do services at Hartford Street. For others, and myself, Hartford Street was a place where we, as GLBT people could feel accepted. We were also open to anyone straight of Gay who wanted to practice there. We incorporated as a Soto temple, and bought the building. I was a member of the first Board of Directors.

For the next twelve years I studied Tea with Hekizan, and my relationship began to be primarily with City Center. My connection with Hartford Street basically was visiting friends who were dying.

After Philip's death, Ottmar Engel became the practice leader. He was German and Gay. George Gayuski told me to come and meet him. I liked Ottmar. I felt his practice was very strong. As a priest, I wanted to help support him and Hartford Street. Sozan Schellin also returned to help Hartford Street. Unfortunately, because of health issues and a lover in Germany, Ottmar had to return.

For eight months, I was the interim practice leader while we looked for a new teacher, and then Myo Lahey, who had lived for a year at Hartford Street in the '90's, became our new practice leader. When I was shuso (head monk) at Tassajara, Myo was the tanto (head of practice); I deeply appreciated the many kindnesses and support that Myo gave to me. So, when he was chosen as practice leader, I wanted to help support him in his transition.

There is now a full house of dedicated residents at Hartford Street. Last Saturday's sitting was so well attended, that all the tatamis were full, and extra zabutons and zafus had to be brought out. Our membership and attendees are about two-thirds GLBT, but fundamentally, we're Sangha, straight of Gay.

REMEMBRANCES:

I remember Lou Hartman's comment about John King, which I wanted to share with you. Philip needed someone to spend a couple of nights with him at Zen Hospice and we were out of bodies. When Lou learned this, he asked John. In talking to Philip about it the next day, Lou said, "I knew John would say, 'Yes.' He's a good priest. That says it all, doesn't it? 'He's a good priest.'" -- **Carl**

Jerome (and Lou Hartman)

For the last three years, under the tutelage of John King, the group (the San Quentin Buddhadharma Sangha) became adept at doan ryo skills, especially the Full Moon Ceremony. John brought a lively, friendly love of the Dharma and ceremony to the group. John's recent death is a great loss. The inmates loved John and miss him. During the last Full Moon Ceremony, we were impressed with the deep, strong chanting of the kokyo and Sangha. -- **Seido Lee de Barros**
(published, HSZC newsletter shortly after John's death)

In 2001, when Philip Whalen was unable to continue at Hartford Street due to illness, John invited me to help keep the temple going. As a new priest I had little experience conducting evening service, so John and I got together one evening and he passed on the forms to me. We were discussing the fact that with no head of practice, everyone had their own version of the temple forms and I said to John, "Shall we give them all some instruction?" We looked at each other and then he said, "No, let's leave it for their new teacher." Suddenly I realized he had just given me the most wonderful teaching on "form is emptiness – emptiness form" and freed me (and everyone I work with!!) from a large piece of judgmental mind. Great liberation given with love.

Talking of love, my other favorite memory is that John and I were always teasing each other about having sex together. One of the last times I saw John at City Center, he grinned at me and said, "We'd better hurry up and have sex, I haven't got much time left." We both laughed. Next lifetime John, I'll leave the light on for you. -- **Gengetsu Jana Drakka**

John was lying on the sofa one afternoon several months before his death. A war was afoot in Lebanon and John was watching the news when I arrived. "There are so many people dying alone over there. And I have so many people around me, caring for me." He had tears in his eyes. "I have so much gratitude." For me, that is the essence of John. -- **Cynthia Kear**

REMEMBRANCES:

I cannot have a story to tell or anything like that. I just will always remember John as one of the kindest people I have ever met. -- **Myo Denis Lahey**

I came to know John King when I began sitting at Hartford Street Zen Center almost four years ago. It is thanks to John that I joined the Board of Directors, and I am still grateful to John for encouraging me to serve the sangha in this way. One year ago, I wrote: "the bright, wonderful spirit that was John remains in the warmth and caring of all of the hearts of his friends and loved ones." This is still so. We love and miss you, Sweetums! -- **Julia Ten Eyck (President, HSZC Board of Directors)**

John seemed so special to me. I know he is gone, but it doesn't feel like it. He left a lot of love behind. His being will reverberate with me for as long as I am alive. I think that must be true for everyone who knew him. I am so grateful to him. A true Bodhisattva. -- **Judy Hoyem**

I'll never forget one of my first visits to Hartford for Saturday morning zazen. John was very attentive and tried to ensure I was comfortable on my zafu, offering me supports for my knees, etc. After zazen, when I was getting ready to leave, John came up to me and introduced himself and invited me for tea and snacks upstairs. I'll never forget those kind, twinkling eyes and warm smile. He was a face on Hartford that made me feel that this was the place where I wanted to be. What a great ambassador he was for us! I miss him. But I know that I'm at Hartford Street today because of him. -- **Albert Kaba**

John much appreciated John's accessibility and humility. -- **Mimi Manning**

While John was experiencing all the pain with his cancer, I was struggling with my practice. John reached out to me with compassion and understanding, guided me with his wisdom and helped me find my way. John's generosity still touches my heart and my practice. -- **Jim Shalkham**

Shortly after I first arrived at HSZC -- I'd been showing up occasionally for a month or so -- John asked me, if by chance, I had a copy of "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind" and since I hadn't heard of it, I said, "No." Next time I saw him, he presented me with a copy. I think he could see that I was a little lost and wondering what Zen was all about. I'll never forget that. -- **John Walmsley**

**"Dear John" Letters (Excerpts from Personal Correspondence between John and Jennifer Birkett)
- 2003 through 2007 - Now**

Dear Jen, All things lately speak of impermanence. I recently brought a former resident (of Maitreya hospice) to visit a friend before they died. They were both skeletons then, and I was becoming one. As I watched them kiss, I thought, "Death is kissing death, and death is watching."

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Dear Jen, At Green Gulch, I love hearing the owls at night and the crows during the day. I also love sitting in that dark zendo in the early morning.

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Dear Jen, What do I cherish about HSZC? The friendship, intimacy, closeness. I told that to Myo. He also added, the heart of it is practicing zazen together. All these ingredients need to fall together in a way which ripens us together rather than sours."

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Dear Jen, I would like to talk with you on how to continue catching, deepening people's attention. It's the big question. How do we deepen our practice?

Blanche says the following verse when she offers incense: "Illuminating the clouds of the Dharma Realm. Serving immeasurable Buddhas in the 10 directions. Perfuming the seeing of the tranquil world." Her writing is so small that I read it as: "Seeing innumerable Buddhas in the 10 directions. Refining the seeing of the tranquil world."

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Dear Jen, Interesting the different kind of walls we can build between each other. Some can be useful like maybe you needed one to protect you from the tsunami, but most separate us. Personally I never can quite get the teacher/student divide. It seems like the "don't look at the little man behind the curtain." To me, we're all learning together.

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Dear Jen, You and Jeremy at Green Gulch are the only two people I know who have read, "Will in the World," (Shakespeare biography) and really enjoyed it. It's one of the most insightful, fascinating books I've ever read.

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Dear John, Last night, I read the chapter on "Speaking with the Dead," from "Will in the World." Amazing insights into Henry VIII's reformation of the church – the persecution of Catholics that continued, stopped and started through the next few kings 'n' queens. Helped me understand how policy against Catholics damaged death rituals and then people had no way to negotiate or communicate with their dead. Protestant reformation ceremonies seem very thin. Person dead, thrown in ground. The end. No bardo, no prayers, no further communication. I've paused a long time around that insight.

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Dear John, Studying your Quaker Guidelines – especially "not harming" each other in the heat of the moment. Acknowledge emotional charge when aware of it. Need more time in silence minding the "inward" light in each of us. Proceed as the way opens. Silence and waiting.

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Dear Jen, I just hope the garden altar meets your standards. Actually, I've been thinking that my grandparents had a barometer in their kitchen. It was the witch's house from Hansel and Gretel. When the weather was rainy, the witch would come out. When sunny, the kids would come out. We could do the same thing. When it's sunny, sun faced Buddha appears; when it's rainy, moon faced Buddha. Maybe I should just do the regular altar.

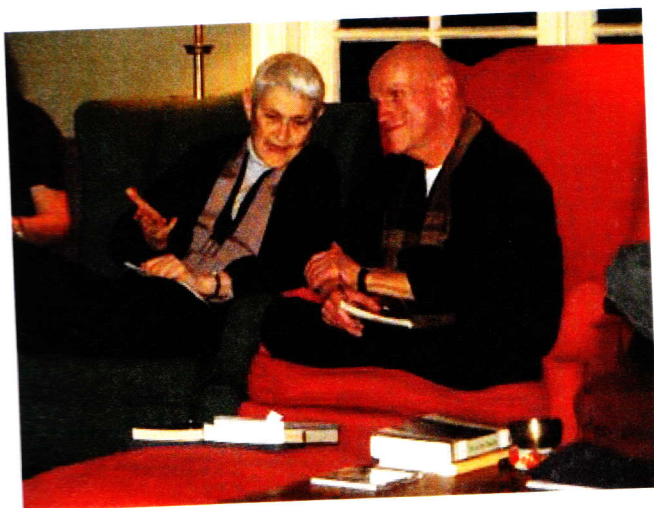
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- in the present -

Dear John, Altar perfect. All bread crumbs of our practice lead to Great Heart John. Sun moon swoon. John not gone.

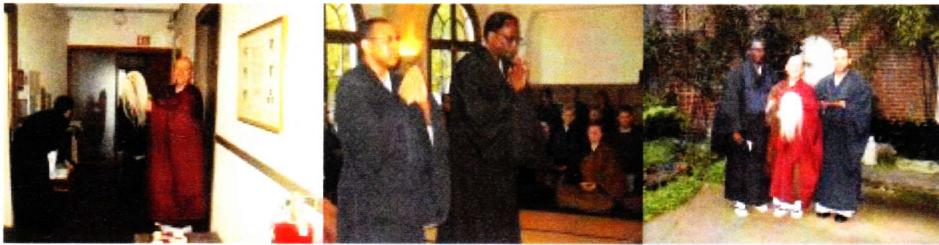
Remarks by Renshin Judy Bunce - Thursday Night Classes

For the last of John's Thursday night classes, we sat in a circle and started by writing down what we would like to live "our one wild and precious life." John spoke at length about the process. Then we passed a mala made of Tassajara manzanita and each of us said something about the class and about John as we held it.



June 18, 2006

JUKAI for Ernest Brown and Edwin Critchlow at SFZC



Excerpts from Ernest Brown's Interview with John (published in Wind Bell 2006):

John: "One of the great joys of life are the people I know. I've only had two students, but it has been wonderful working with them."

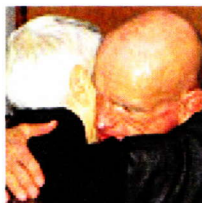
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Ernest (Taizan Iryu): Do you know more now than prior to hearing the Dharma and if so, what?

John: In the context of trusting one's experience and having the tool of this practice, it's not knowledge per se but trust that this practice reveals life as it is - to be completely engaged with our lives.

The Dharma is so exquisite and we're such donkeys. We should awaken to how wonderful life is each moment. As I directly face my death, I am very much reminded of this.

MARCH 8, 2006 --- John's Robe Ceremony



Images from Zenkei Blanche Hartman's Dharma Talk on March 11, 2006 at City Center
"Thoughts on Turning Eighty"

We had a ceremony to give John a new okesa that we had sewn for him. Later that day, he came back over to City Center to officiate at evening service and then he went over to the hall to teach zazen and then he went to a meeting about a project called, "Coming Home." This is a project the Buddhist Peace Fellowship is working on to develop ways for returning re-enter society after they get out of prison. So, John is still living his life in the middle of his dying.

When we went to Tassajara for a visit, Abbot Paul Haller visited John. He asked John if he had a message for the students there. John said, "Tell everyone there that I love them so much." When Paul had left, he said, "Call Paul and tell him to tell them, 'Water is water.'"

One of the Practices of a Bodhisattva, the first one is generosity or giving. A monk gives the Dharma and a monk gives fearlessness. Since I read that about twenty years ago, I've been wondering, "What is fearlessness?" It doesn't seem to be never experiencing fear. It's more not being overwhelmed by fear. Being able to be with fear and see it arise and subside. I think again that John is being a true monk. He is showing us how not to be overwhelmed by fear of dying; by being with us, among us, not going off somewhere to die but being right here with us, teaching and eating and playing and loving and laughing and whatever - being John.

Notes: The "water" quote refers to the concept of the *wave* from Thich Nhat Hanh's *Training in the Buddha* (See Wind Bell, Volume 40, pages 25-26). "When we look at the ocean, we see that each wave has a beginning and an end. A wave can be compared with other waves and we can call it more or less beautiful, higher or lower, lasting longer or not lasting long, but if we look more deeply we see that a wave is made of water. It would be sad if the wave did not know that it is water. It would think, 'Someday I will have to die. This period of life is my lifespan and when I arrive at the shore I will return to non-being.' These notions will cause the wave fear and anguish. We have to help it remove the notions of self, person, living being, and lifespan if we want the wave to be free and happy."

John's Student: Ernest Brown



John met with me several times a week as my teacher. So when he approached me one day with a somewhat serious look and said, “We need to make an appointment,” it took me off guard. I thought, “I must have committed some grave faux pas at City Center.” I racked my brain trying to remember some mindless act I had committed that had been reported to my teacher. I was anxious to meet and get through my chastisement. Of course John had never come close to chastising me for anything. He was much more interested in confessing his past indiscretions than pointing out mine.

When we met, he got right to the point. “I’ve got esophageal cancer and the doctors say I have about 3 months to live.” My regret, even guilt, at being so self-absorbed was piercing, like a hot steel spear penetrating my gut. I saw John almost every day after that moment until he transitioned.

John always demonstrated his extreme compassion for humanity by his tireless service to others in every aspect of his life: from mornings at Hartford Street to San Quentin services, to tea events and casual encounters, to his teaching and general socializing. Even when he was having fun, he seemed to do it for the benefit of his guests and even hosts.

But his service following his diagnosis was so inspiring as to warrant the great poet Basho to return and give us a memorial statement to John. Every plan John made was

...of the comfort of others during this time. When we traveled through the snow to ... to say goodbye there, he knew he risked being stranded and ... for himself. Although he got progressively more weak and ... the weekly San Quentin services until the week prior to being bed ... the evening lecture he conducted near the end of his stay with us, he taught ... although he scarcely had the strength to present incense prior to the lesson.

... that someone could transmit to me so much of what it means to be ... a short time. Although I have yet to learn most of the lessons John had in ... say that he has already shown me the "Way." And although I miss ... be engraved in my thoughts. So far, yet nearer than a breath, ... the noonday sun, so ephemeral, yet as solid as a mountain. ... a holder of Buddhism.

... waga naku koe wa aki no kaze.

... sound of my wailing the autumn wind. --Basho

John's Student: Edwin Critchlow

... when he was interim practice leader at Hartford Street Zen Center, ... instructions, leading ceremonies and scheduling dharma talks. One ... dharma talk, he announced that he was sewing his robes and invited ... to contribute. I assumed that robe sewing was something like a ... where a small group meets regularly to sew sections until the project is ... Sewing to join a dharma group, one Tuesday night I went to the San ... Sewing Room to join in the project.

... a few weeks to learn the special stitch with Namu Ki-e Butsu mantra and ... together, the sewing teachers voiced surprise to see me return again ... more and more of John's robe. John then told me that usually a priest's ... contribute just a few stitches to the robes. It was then that I realized ... again and again into this practice of being present in each stitch.

... for this practice.

... would meet to chat dharma over dinner in Japantown. We soon fell into ... vegetable tempura with noodles. The first time plates of hot deep-fried ... I exclaimed that eggplant was my favorite. From then on, ... I could not stop him from giving me his eggplant tempura, even ... onto my plate when I stepped away to wash my hands.

... a generous heart in every way.

Dear John, Hartford Street Members and Guests:

Through the graciousness of Greg Fain and many others, I am able to be with you and speak these few words. My name is Mac and I am a member of the San Quentin Buddhisthadharma Sangha. Approximately a year ago, I was having a discussion with John about an altar for your garden. From that discussion, John brought me a leaflet from Tassajara, which showed an outside altar. After seeing what was needed, I offered to make it.

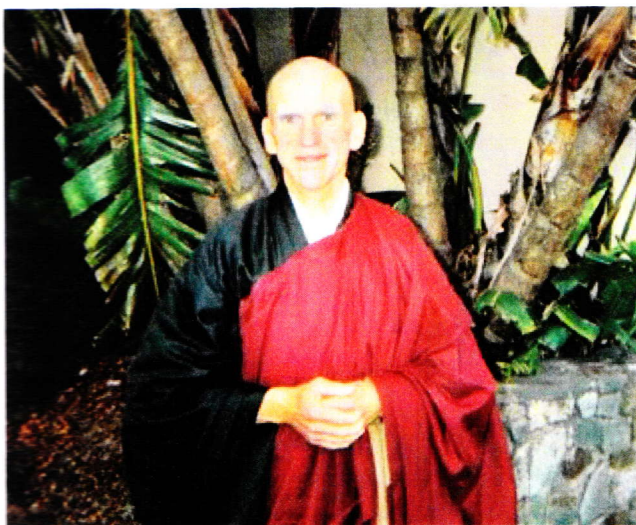
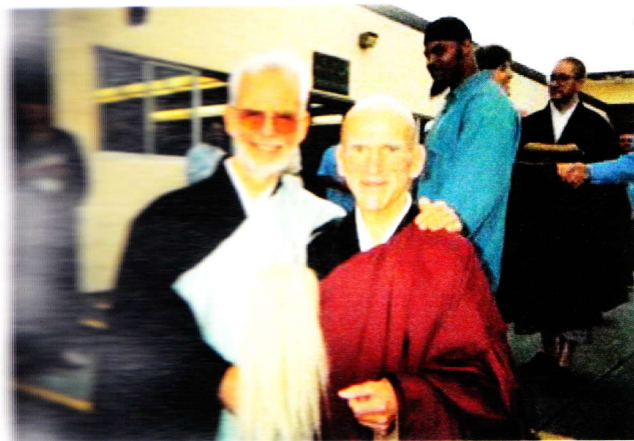
It was suggested (by John) that a donation could be made for this effort. Please understand that, that would not be acceptable! It was an honor and a privilege to do this for you. What might have been lacking in craftsmanship, we hope was more than made up for in the love that went into it.

At this time, on behalf of all the Sangha members at San Quentin, I would humbly like to present you an Outside Altar designed for your garden.

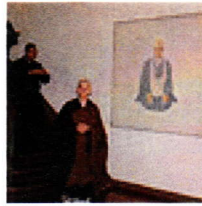
Please accept this with our love and compassion. Perhaps some day, members of our Sangha will be able to come and sit zazen in the garden with you.



Monks at San Quentin - Buddhadharma Sangha
Shrine Dedication - July 29, 2006



Excerpts from John's Dharma Talk in the Buddha Hall - July 5, 2006
"Assumptions - On Living and Dying"



I'm sure all of you know my condition, but in particular, I can't take anything by mouth anymore and am unable to taste food.

A lot of you have gone through personal traumas in your life; you've lost people you love. Some of you have been fighting cancer yourselves or have lost people in your families through disease or other causes, so you all know what it's like to embrace death in some form. And all of you, all of us, at some point will die.

I've decided to die at home and there are numerous people who have signed up to help take care of me.... What a gift that is. I feel for people who die alone; how difficult it must be. With cancer or with any disease, there are going to be moments of terror and anxiety. So it's a great joy to have people volunteer to be present.

It's interesting to see the variety of responses from others as I go through this process. And yet, I try to accept whatever they're giving. As sweet Suzuki-roshi called it, "Thank-you-very-much practice."

Everything is in constant flux.... How do we pull this all together? The answer is *shikantanza*, just sitting. In that moment, all our thoughts and assumptions arise and form and we let them go. All those habitual thoughts about who we are, who we think we should be.

In this dropping away of our assumptions, this dropping away of body and mind, we can begin to see things as they are without preconditions. We can be fully present. And then we can listen deeply to what people are telling us, rather than running a story in our heads about what we think they are really saying. Are they being fully present? Are you being fully present? Are you meeting each other in some significant way?

By doing this practice of *shikantanza*, we can see through our likes and dislikes, without trying to control our world; rather just seeing things as they are.

JOHN's MEMORIAL August 26, 2006



From Zenkei Blanche Hartman's "Thoughts on Turning Eighty"

Death is a great mystery. We don't know what it is. We don't know what happens when we die. A monk asked a Zen master, "What happens when you die?" The Zen master replied, "I don't know." The monk said, "What do you mean, you don't know? Aren't you a Zen master?" And the Zen master replied, "Yes, but I'm not a dead one."

My teacher, Zenkei-roshi said towards the end of his life, "Things teach best when they're dying." I am certainly appreciating that with John.

John Daniel King, a long-time student and teacher, died August 8, 2006 -- one year ago.)

Footnotes and Credits

- Page 1 - John King Photo from Scattering Ashes Ceremony - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
Tea Graphic - www.newschoolaikido.org
--Note-- John's name was changed from Shishin Dainei (Lion Heart, Great Peace)
to Kanshin Dainei (Generous Heart, Great Peace) upon his death
- Page 2 - John King Photo - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
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- Page 3 - Text from HSZC Newsletter (Fall 2002)
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- Page 4 - Message from Rev. Tony Patchell
John King Photo - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
- Page 5 - Message from Rev. Zenkei Blanche Hartman
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- Page 6 - Text from HSZC Newsletter (Fall 2004)
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- Page 7 - Text from HSZC Newsletter (Summer 2004)
- Page 8 - Text from HSZC Newsletter (Spring 2004)
- Page 9 - Text from HSZC Newsletter (Summer 2004)
- Page 10 - Remembrances
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- Page 12 - Personal Correspondence (John King and Jennifer Birkett, 2003-2007)
- Page 13 - Remarks and Class Photos by Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
- Page 14 - Sewing Room Photo - Cynthia Gair (via Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce's website)
All Jukai Photos - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
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Page 15 - Robe Photos - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
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Page 16 - Text and Photos - Ernest Brown

Page 17 - Text (Continued) - Ernest Brown
Text - Edwin Critchlow

Page 18 - Text - Courtesy of Greg Fain and Mac of San Quentin Buddhadharma Sangha
Altar Photo - Bob Craig

Page 19 - San Quentin Photos - Ilene Oba (via Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce's website)

Page 20 - Dharma Talk Photos - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
Text - Excerpts John King's talk (Courtesy SFZC Wind Bell (Vol. 40, 2006))

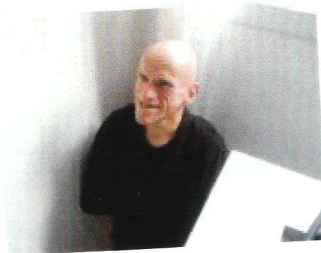
Page 21 - Memorial Photos - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
Text - Rev. Zenkei Blanche Hartman (Courtesy SFZC Wind Bell (Vol. 40, 2006))

Page 22 - Notes and credits compiled by Jim Shalkham

Page 23 - Notes and credits compiled by Jim Shalkham
Celebration Photos - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce

--Note-- Photo of "Shoes on the Doorstep" was taken at John's Life Celebration

Page 24 - Photo of Blanche and John - Rev. Renshin Judy Bunce
Poem - Excerpt John King's talk (Courtesy SFZC Wind Bell (Vol. 40, 2006))



Poem Excerpt from John's Dharma Talk in the Buddha Hall - July 5, 2006
"Assumptions - On Living and Dying"



CLOSING POEM (Ryokan)

If there is beauty, there must be ugliness;
If there is right, there must be wrong.
Wisdom and ignorance are complementary,
And illusion and enlightenment cannot be separated.
This is an old truth, don't think that it was discovered recently.
"I want this, I want that"
Is nothing but foolishness.
I'll tell you a secret--
"All things are impermanent!"

"With Love from Hartford Street Zen Center"
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